

**From Dominance/Oppression to Awareness/Love:
Reflections on Anti-Racism Russell Delman June 2020**

The Embodied Life teachings focus on exploring our inner tyrannies that interfere with our true nature as loving, caring beings. We unwind the oppressive attitudes, stories, thoughts, feelings, and body patterns we have internalized. Hatred of our bodies, incessant comparing of self and other, mean-spirited judgments and self-defeating emotional habits are examples of this tyranny. Through embodied practices devoted to growing warm-hearted, clear awareness, we deconstruct these patterns in body and mind.

I have long assumed that authentic, deep change occurs one nervous system/one heart at a time. While I still believe that this is fundamental to transformation, I also see the need for structural, societal dismantling of our inequitable, abusive power structure. **To me this is a human/spiritual issue and only secondarily a political one.**

Like many of us, I am enraged and outraged witnessing brutal injustices, disproportionately inflicted by police upon people with black and brown bodies. Enraged feelings arise seeing individual cases of abuse; outraged feelings come from being part of the social order that creates this system. Some of us have been studying these issues for years yet are still beginners in unlearning/acknowledging inherent bias and our silent complicity. My European friends speak of the same suffering, when witnessing attitudes toward refugees.

An Offering

For white people to explore our often-unconscious participation with this system and to speak with each other about it is a potentially revolutionary step. Carol Delmonico, an Embodied Life graduate has been deeply engaged in these issues and is offering guidance on how to form small groups to both educate yourself and to support each member in finding their “right actions”. She has co-authored a workbook that can be freely downloaded from their website <https://wonderuprising.com> Carol welcomes your involvement and questions.

I agree with Carol and co-author Casey Davis's focus on three interactive aspects of the work: 1) learning about the history of the system we are enmeshed in, 2) developing specific, doable actions to participate in the dismantling of racism and 3) evolving our collective consciousness to accelerate this transformation.

As a fellow traveler on the path of "*Awareness, Love and Freedom*", I offer the following rudimentary reflections. These are not novel observations and will likely be familiar to those who have been exploring these issues. I present these not as an expert but as a student in these challenging times, to encourage our individual and collective investigation.

Reflections for your consideration:

- We have been educated and brought up in systems that teach dominance/oppression as a way of controlling behavior. This ideology permeates our relationship to our bodies and our minds as well as to "others".
- "Othering", the seeing of people who look different as inherently dangerous, sustains this system. Some would argue that this is part of our DNA and lower brain survival functioning. IF so, then like much of our biological history, it is transcendable through awareness, deep bodily practices and clear thought.
- The predominant challenges for a thriving world - the destruction of the earth, oppression and violence toward women, child abuse, economic insecurity and racism – emanate from this dominance ideology. In the modern world, racism, based in white supremacy, is a main support for this system.
- White supremacy is the belief that whiteness is superior and is the gold standard for judging all people. This view permeates the Western world and even much of the East.
- Whiteness and race are inventions that have no biological basis. They were created in the 17th century as a way of justifying violence toward and enslavement of people of color for economic gain.

- There is a huge difference between non-racist and anti-racist (for more see Ibram X. Kendi). Many of us who consider ourselves **relatively** free of racial prejudice (we all have some racial conditioning from the social air we have been breathing since birth) benefit from white supremacy and have a moral obligation to become anti-racist. This stance is not only to help “others” (not white savior syndrome) but is essential for our own happiness, peace and freedom.
- To become truly anti-racist (and not just a nice, non-racist) requires learning, actions and a transformation of consciousness.
- We do not live as individuals only; we are inseparable from much larger systems. Individual freedom ultimately requires our active caring for all beings.

The evolution of consciousness requires shifting from Dominance/Oppression to Awareness/Love as our main operating principle.

Numerous groups throughout the world are exploring this human/spiritual transformation, in differing ways. This is a powerful moment, a potential tipping point. The Embodied Life School shares this impulse.

Core views of The Embodied Life School:

*We stand on two legs:
Awareness and Love.*

*Without **Awareness**, we are bound to repeat the past and live in fear.
Love, expressed as Universal caring for life, is at the core of our Being.
It is how we are when we are not fearful and confused.*

Please join us in this individual and collective transformation.

